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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 25 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

I have the honour to address you in your capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, attaching a note verbale dated 24 July 2007 addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations by the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you would distribute the present letter and its annex as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Rodolfo **Benitez Verson**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 25 July 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

[Original: English and Spanish]

New York, 24 July 2007

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the latter's note dated 6 July 2007, in response to the note dated 13 June 2007 sent by the Permanent Mission of Cuba expressing deep concern over the denial of permission requested by two Cuban diplomats to travel beyond the 25-mile radial area from Columbus Circle to attend an informal meeting of the Working Group on the Crime of Aggression, chaired by the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein and open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, which was held at Princeton University, New Jersey, from 11 to 14 June 2007.

In its note, the United States Mission to the United Nations states that it "wishes to clarify the nature of travel restrictions imposed on certain members of the United Nations diplomatic community, including the members of the Permanent Mission of Cuba".

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations has no doubt about the nature of the restrictions imposed on the movement of Cuban diplomats and other international officers with Cuban citizenship, accredited to the United Nations or serving in it. Such restrictions are completely unfair, selective, discriminatory and politically motivated and contravene the host country's obligations under the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations and the host country, as well as the provisions of other international legal instruments relative to diplomatic prerogatives and immunities, to which the United States of America is a party. Likewise, those restrictions are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in Their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character, of 14 March 1975.

Also, the aforementioned note of the United States Mission, in its effort to justify the unjustifiable, says that "As the meeting of the Informal Working Group on the Crime of Aggression to which the Cuban note verbale refers was not an official United Nations meeting, the United States was not legally obligated to permit attendance and chose not to extend this courtesy."

The Permanent Mission of Cuba deems these arguments unacceptable and would like to reiterate its profound concern over the fact that United States authorities utterly ignore their international obligations and consider the legitimate right of Cuba to attend this meeting as a mere "courtesy".

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations reiterates that the informal meeting of the Working Group on the Crime of Aggression held in Princeton was organized by a Permanent Mission to the United Nations. Furthermore, it is concerned with one of the agenda items under debate in the General Assembly, entitled "Report of the International Criminal Court".

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations once again urges the authorities of the host country to reconsider their position on the issue at hand and abide by their obligations under international treaties, in full observance of the general principles of the rule of law.